THE
CATHOLIC RADICAL

"...to foster a society based on creed instead of greed..." Peter Maurin

February/March 2006 **Price: For whatever it's worth**

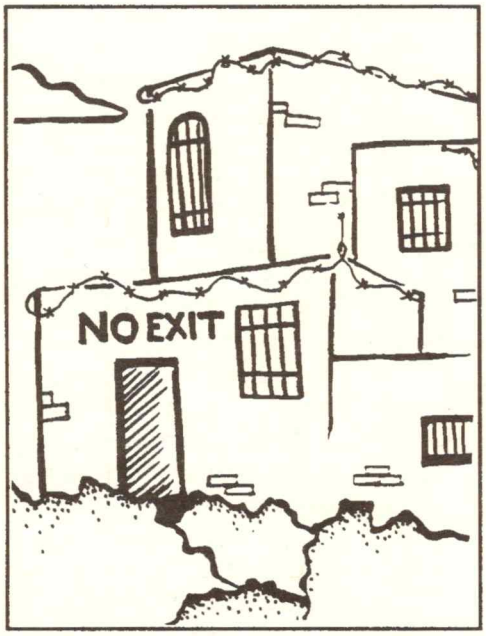
Habeas Corpus

by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

In 1988, during a jail sentence for civil disobedience, I co-authored a petition against the abuse of inmates. In response, jail authorities charged me with fifteen infractions including "inciting a riot." I was taken in chains from minimum security to a bitterly cold, windowless cell with neither a mattress nor a blanket. I was denied visits, use of a phone, and the ability to write letters. When I mentioned the booklet of inmate rights given to me upon arrival at the jail, a deputy screamed, "You have no rights!!! You are an inmate, a ward of the state!" Only after news of my situation was leaked to the media via the chaplain's office was I released from lockup.

Today, an unknown number of people are being held in an unknown number of locations, under unknown conditions, for unknown reasons, over unknown lengths of time by the United States government and its agents. On November 2, 2005, *The Washington Post* exposed that the US is detaining people in eight secret locations around the globe. Shortly thereafter, the International Committee for the Red Cross admitted that it has long sought access to numerous prisoners in US custody who cannot be found at public locations. In light of the Abu Ghraib prisoner abuse scandal, the obvious concern is that detainees are being held in secret so they can be tortured with impunity. Indeed, the American Civil Liberties Union charges that at least 21 of these extrajudicial detainees have not only been abused, but murdered in US custody. The White House denies these claims, but does not allow the media, human rights organizations, the United Nations, or lawyers free access to investigate prison conditions.

The Bush administration is setting records on secrecy. More documents have been classified by this administration than any other. Individuals who leak information that is embarrassing to the administration are harshly dealt with. Ambassador Joseph Wilson's revelation that President Bush knowingly misled Congress and the American people in its rush to war on Iraq prompted



Grace Duffy

the administration to retaliate by exposing Wilson's wife as a CIA agent. After U.S. Army Captain Ian Fishback tried unsuccessfully for 17 months to get his superiors to respond to prisoner abuse he witnessed in Iraq, Fishback and two anonymous sergeants gave testimony to Human Rights Watch. Since then, rather than investigating the abuse, the military has repeatedly pressed Fishback to identify the other whistleblowers. The same dynamic is taking place with the Justice Department's response to the revelation that President Bush authorized tens of thousands of unwarranted wiretaps. Rather than investigating the White House, Attorney General

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Works of Mercy

by Marc Tumeinski

"I was hungry and you gave me food, thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me." (Mt 25)

With these words, Jesus commends the works of mercy. What should astonish and challenge the Christian in this Gospel is that our Lord and God says that in caring for the needs of the least, we are caring for Christ Himself.

Imagine having the privilege of spending time with the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and what is more, of doing something for Him. How would we act if we met Jesus Christ in this way? We would consider such a meeting a gift beyond compare. We would wish to spend as much time with Him as we could. We would treat Him with all the honor and dignity we could muster.

Jesus tells us that indeed we are spending time with Him when we help those who are hungry or imprisoned. In serving the sick or the lonely, we serve the "hidden Christ."

Sad to say, most people nowadays pass up this opportunity. Many Christians believe that simply donating money to a charity or institution equals Christ's call to service. They leave the works of mercy to formal, funded, bureaucratized, and organized service agencies. Jesus said that those who fed Him, cared for Him, welcomed Him, or nursed Him, would receive eternal life. These are intrinsically personal acts.

I do not mean to belittle the donation of money to charities, or to judge those who volunteer in nursing homes or prisons. (Almsgiving is obviously commendable, though more likely because it is a sacrifice rather than a work of mercy.) I also do not

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Habeas Corpus

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Gonzalez is going after *The New York Times* for publishing the story.

President Bush has used the War on Terror like Senator Joseph McCarthy used the Cold War as an excuse for the abuse of fundamental rights. In the same way that the House Un-American Activities Committee destroyed people's careers through secret, unsubstantiated testimony, rumor, and downright lies, the White House has held people without charge on the flimsiest of pretexts. In 2002, two Afghani journalists, with no history of violence whatsoever, were taken to the US prison in Guantánamo for writing a satirical article suggesting that Afghans respond to the Clinton administration's $1,000,000 bounty for Osama bin Laden by offering five million "afghanis" ($113) for President Clinton. What they called their "lampoon... of the poor Afghan economy" cost them three years in jail and hundreds of grueling interrogations.

When the abuse at Abu Ghraib became public, the White House and Pentagon first claimed that it was an isolated instance. Later, after hundreds of documented cases of abuse in numerous locations came to light, the White House classified many of the photographs as secret even while it assured the public that a full investigation of all those responsible would be held. Nonetheless, more than a year later, only the lowest ranking military personnel have been tried for abusing detainees while reportscontinue to surface of prisoners being "remanded" by US agents to countries where they can be tortured without public exposure. If there was ever any doubt of President Bush's support for torture it was dispelled when he urged Senator John McCain to exempt the CIA from a bill to ban the practice outright. Had McCain bent to the President's request, Congress would, for the first time in US history, have gone on record as approving torture, a complete bastardization of the legislation's purpose.

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CATHOLIC RADICAL

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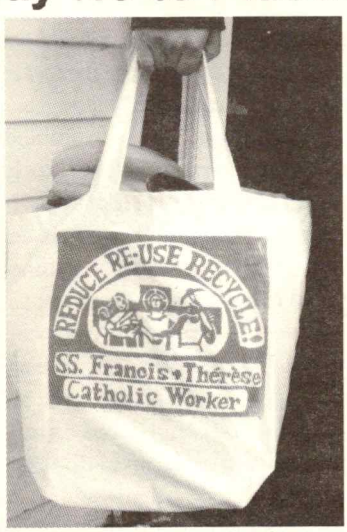
The Catholic Worker is a lay movement offering hospitality to the poor while denouncing injustice and promoting peace. We are not tax exempt. We rely entirely on the generosity of our supporters to meet our expenses. We welcome your letters, poetry, articles, and art work.

In December, 25 Americans, many of them Catholic Workers, marched across Cuba hoping to visit the prisoners held in Guantánamo. In solidarity with 84 of the detainees, who have been fasting for their release, the activists fasted at the checkpoint where US officials denied them entry. Speaking for the group, Sr. Anne Montgomery said, "We're all looking for just and humane treatment for all the detainees whether in Guantánamo, Iraq, or other hidden detention camps we can't reach."

The post 9/11 hodgepodge of human rights abuses is an affront to many civil liberties, but most significantly to the right of *habeas corpus*. It is defined by Webster's New Universal Dictionary as "a writ or order requiring that a prisoner be brought before a court at a stated time and place to decide the legality of his detention and imprisonment; the right of habeas corpus safeguards one against illegal detention or imprisonment." The right of habeas corpus traces itself back to 1305 during the reign of England's King Edward I. It is enshrined in the United States Constitution and praised by the Supreme Court as "the fundamental instrument for safeguarding individual freedom against arbitrary and lawless state action" (Harris v. Nelson, 394 U.S., 286) and as "the centerpiece of our liberties" (McCleskey, 499 U.S. at 467).

Although my experience "disappearing" in jail without a public appearance in court was brief, it afforded me an inkling of how horrible it must be to be held in prison without outside contact or judicial redress. *The Associated Press* reported on December 2, 2005 that Europeans are already referring to American secret prisons in Eastern Europe as "a flashback to Stalin's Soviet Union." No country, especially not one which has long defended habeas corpus, should kidnap suspects and hide them in "gulags" where torture and death may well await them. The denial of habeas corpus to detainees is more than a public relations disaster. It is an ominous harbinger of what political dissidents and peace activists might expect in various countries should the American practice not be halted immediately. Ω

Say No to Plastic



To get your own cloth shopping bag, with or without the Catholic Worker logo, contact us at 52 Mason St., Worcester, MA 01610. No set price, donations welcome.

Moving the Pope on Peace

by Mairead Corrigan Maguire

On November 23, 2005, as part of a delegation of Nobel Peace Laureates in Rome attending the Sixth Nobel Peace Summit, I had the privilege of meeting with Pope Benedict XVI. Prior to our audience, in his public address in Saint Peter's Square, the Pope spoke of unconditional love. I could not help asking myself, "If the Catholic Church speaks so much about unconditional love, why do so many Christians facilitate and participate in violence, armed struggle, and war?" The answer might be that the message is too vague. There is too much ambiguity about violence, and many Christians are confused by the old Just War Theory. In truth, because each of us is the "temple of the Holy Spirit," and in the words of Vatican II "grace lives in the hearts of all men and women," how can we hurt or kill the spirit of God living in another person? How can we hurt or kill our brothers and sisters and say we love them?

When I met the Pope, I took the chance to ask him to "abolish the Just War Theory and proclaim the nonviolent gospel of Jesus." He smiled. (In May, 2003, Pope Benedict, then Cardinal Ratzinger, said "...we should be asking ourselves if it is still licit to admit the very existence of a 'just war.'") I told him I was from Northern Ireland, and invited him to visit us. The encounter was brief and intense. I was moved by his quiet, peaceful, and listening persona. Understanding that I would not have much time to speak with him, I had written him a letter. In it I asked the Pope, as this was the year of the Eucharist, the sacrament of nonviolence, to consider calling a Council to declare "No Just War and proclaim the Nonviolence of Jesus." I stated my belief that the world very much needs this "message of active nonviolence." I also wrote that I believed "it would truly be a Pentecostal moment if the church proclaimed Jesus' nonviolence to a world in need of renewal and healing."

The Catholic Church officials will argue that they are for peace and always have been. But tragically, the practical gospel message against killing and for love of enemies is often, for the church, a step too far, and hence, since the third century and the time of Constantine, Christians have been amongst the most war-like and violent people on earth. Many American and British Christians today consider the invasion of Iraq, use of phosphorus chemical weapons on civilians, and torture of detainees as justifiable to stop terrorism. They seem blind to the fact that war is terrorism!

To all our shame, only a handful of bishops in the USA actually opposed the war against Afghanistan, and very many American Christians support war and the invasion of Iraq. In Ireland, how many continue to support paramilitaries and the "armed struggle"? How many put aside the message of love of enemy and nonkilling? I believe, if there is to be any future for humanity, we must transform our violent cultures into nonviolent ones and begin to build nonkilling societies where we live. In developing such a new culture, all faith traditions have a role to play bringing peace and nonviolence to the center of their theology. The human family faces violence on many fronts—war, nuclear weapons, poverty, environmental degradation, human rights abuse, violence against women. We await with hope what His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI and our world's spiritual leaders have to say to us on such issues of our time. Ω

Editor's note: The following are excerpts from Pope Benedict's January 1, 2006, message "In Truth, Peace." We welcome his words, and join Ms. Maguire in calling the Pope to completely embrace nonviolence and reject the Just War Theory.

I wish to reiterate the steadfast resolve of the Holy See to continue serving the cause of peace. The very name Benedict... is a sign of my personal commitment to peace. In taking this name, I wanted to evoke... Pope Benedict XV, who condemned the First World War as a "useless slaughter" and worked for a universal acknowledgment of the lofty demands of peace.

...whenever men and women are enlightened by the splendor of truth, they naturally set out on the path of peace.... We need but think of the events of the past century, when aberrant ideologies and political systems wilfully twisted the truth and brought about the exploitation and murder of an appalling number of men and women, wiping out entire families and communities. After experiences like these, how can we fail to be seriously concerned about lies in our own time, lies which are the framework for menacing scenarios of death in many parts of the world....

What can be said, too, about those governments which count on nuclear arms as a means of ensuring the security of their countries? ...this point of view is not only baneful but also completely fallacious. In a nuclear war there would be no victors, only victims. The truth of peace requires that all—whether those governments which openly or secretly possess nuclear arms, or those planning to acquire them—agree to change their course by clear and firm decisions, and strive for a progressive and concerted nuclear disarmament. The resources which would be saved could then be employed in projects of development capable of benefiting all their people, especially the poor.

In this regard, one can only note with dismay the evidence of a continuing growth in military expenditure and the flourishing arms trade, while the political and juridic process established by the international community for promoting disarmament is bogged down in general indifference. How can there ever be a future of peace when investments are still made in the production of arms and in research aimed at developing new ones? It can only be hoped that the international community will find the wisdom and courage to take up once more, jointly and with renewed conviction, the process of disarmament.... Ω

Mercy

(Continued from Page 1)

discount how even our most humble or imperfect efforts can mean so much to another person. But if we take Jesus at His word, that serving the lowly and needy is serving Him, would we only write a check to a homeless shelter to help the hidden Christ? Would we just impersonally give out food, clothes, or medicine without spending any one-on-one time with those in need? Christ urges us to go deeper. Jesus invites us, through service of others, to a profound relationship with Him. We certainly know this about our own relationships: they require our personal engagement.

Matthew 25 calls us to seek out opportunities to spend time with Christ in need, caring for Him. We are to try to get to know Him as best we can, and to open ourselves to Him. We should long to be with Him rather than see it as an onerous chore. We should offer "Jesus in the poor" the best we can. When it grows difficult serving someone in need, we should strive to remember the promise of eternal life made by Christ (Mt 25:34), and who it is that we truly are serving.

For the Christian disciple, to serve others is at its heart a personal act. To meet Christ in the lowly is to honor the dignity of the needy, and to take personal responsibility. This cannot be done by just signing a check. It is hard to do as a volunteer who remains at arm's length from the sick or imprisoned. It takes time and personal involvement. Like so many acts in the Christian life, it often involves carrying the Cross. But as Peter Maurin, cofounder of the Catholic Worker movement, wrote: "because the poor were fed, clothed, and sheltered at a personal sacrifice, the pagans used to say about the Christians, 'See how they love each other.'" But now they say "See how they pass the buck." Ω

Hospitality

by Ivan Illich (1926-2002)

Hospitality might be the starting point of politics: a practice of hospitality recovering the threshold, the door through which I can invite you, the table around which you can sit, and, when you get tired, the bed where you can sleep, and from there generating seedbeds for virtue and friendship on the one hand, and on the other, radiating out for the possible rebirth of community. But this is difficult because television, the Internet, newspapers—these have abolished the walls and the doorways, and therefore also friendship, the possibility of leading somebody through the door.

Hospitality, that is, the readiness to accept somebody who is not from our hut, not from within our threshold, seems to be among the most universal characteristics that anthropologists can identify. But hospitality, wherever it has appeared, makes distinctions. For the Greeks, *xenia*, hospitality, distinguished between those who are Hellenes and those who are barbarians. Xenia primarily refers to Hellenes; it's a behavior which knows there's an outside and an inside. It's not for humans in general.

Then comes that most upsetting guy, Jesus of Nazareth, who, by speaking about something extraordinarily great and showing it by example, destroys something basic. When they ask Him, "Who is my neighbor" he tells a story about a Jew who has been beaten up in a robbery. First two Jews walk by the victim and don't notice him. Then a Palestinian walks by—a Samaritan is a Palestinian—sees the injured Jew, takes him into his own arms, and does what hospitality does not obligate him to. He treats him as a brother. This breaking of the limitation of hospitality, from a narrow group to the broadest possible group, might be taken as the key message of Christianity.

Then, in the fourth century, the church was finally recognized. The bishops were made into something like magistrates. The first thing these new bishops do is create houses of hospitality, roofs and refuges for foreigners, institutionalizing what was given to each of us as a personal vocation by Jesus. Immediately, the great Christian thinkers of that time, John Chrysostom, for example, cry out, recognizing that if you institutionalize charity, if you make charity or hospitality into an act of a nonperson, of a community, Christians will cease to remain famous for always having an extra mattress, a crust of bread, and a candle, for whomever might knock at their door.

For political reasons, the church became, from that time on, a device for the state, enabling the state to prove it was Christian by paying the church to care for, institutionally, a small fraction of those in need. The church relieved the ordinary Christian of the most uncomfortable duty of having a door open for those who need help. This is what I speak about as the institutionalization of charity.

Now, I cannot imagine such a system being reformable, even though it might be your task, and the task of others, to work at the reform of the service system and make the evils it carries with it as small as possible. What I have chosen and other friends have chosen, as our task, is to awaken in people the sense of this Palestinian. I can choose. I have to choose. I have to decide whom I will take into my arms, to whom I will lose myself, whom I will treat as that *vis-à-vis*, that face into which I will look and lovingly touch with my fingering gaze, from whom I will accept being who I am as a gift. Ω

The Place Where We Live

by Claire Schaeffer-Duffy

Our house sits on the corner of Mason Court, a cul-de-sac of six small lots, three on each side of a narrow gravel road. The houses on the Court are tiny one and a half story structures. Originally built on a four-room plan, each has a front room and kitchen on the first floor, and two bedrooms with steeply sloping ceilings on the second.

"They are the smallest dwellings I have come upon," said Neil Larson, an architectural historian. After surveying our neighborhood last summer, Mr. Larson convinced Worcester's Historical Commission to list the neighborhood of Mason Court, which he defined as the cottages, and 50, 52, and 54 Mason Street, on its register of historical resources because the buildings housed one of the city's oldest black communities.

Mason Court does not appear on an 1870 Worcester map. Instead there are two blank rectangles numbered 66 and 69. The neatly drawn shapes mark the boundary of lots owned by Joseph Mason and Francis Henshaw Dewey, enterprising Worcester attorneys who bought a large tract of land in the southwestern corner of the city some time in the late 1860s. Where others saw farms, countryside and flowing stream, the two speculators saw plots ripe for residential development.

By 1886, an "M. Holman" owned lots 66 and 69. The land was partitioned and the six cottages of Mason Court constructed. The small, cheaply made cottages were on the rural fringe of the city's developping industrial region. Their structure and location suggest they were built for "marginalized people," Mr. Larson said.

With the exception of Henry Germain, the French Canadian grocer, the earliest inhabitants of Mason Court were African Americans. Among them were William Roberts, a piano mover, the widow Mary White, who washed clothes for a living, and Amsted Jackson a boiler operator for P. Blaisdell and Company, makers of machinist's tools on Jackson Street.

Like many marginalized neighborhoods, the cul-de-sac was a transitory place. Its occupants came from far away, lived here awhile and then moved on. Many of its residents were southern blacks, who migrated north after the Civil War. Excluded from the new factories that attracted many of the city's immigrants, they worked as gardeners, coachmen, carpet-layers, laborers, and domestics.

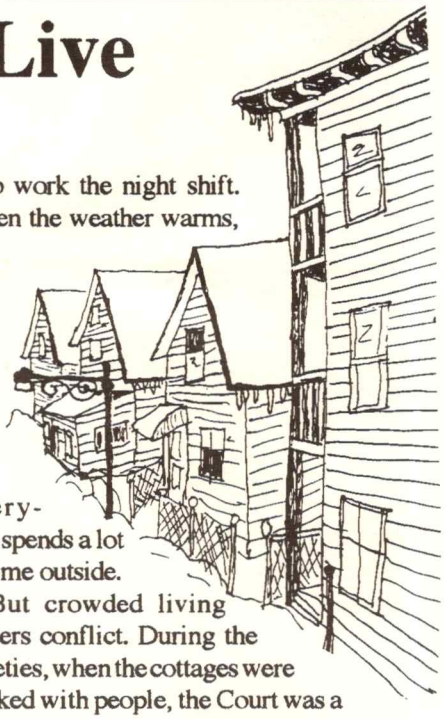
The house where we live was built around 1898 and purchased in 1900 by Augustus Railford, a brick mason from Georgia. He lived here with his young wife, Amy, and a boarder, Wallace Sumpter, a lathe tender. The couple had two small children who evidently died young. 50 Mason Street was constructed around the turn of the last century. During its first three decades, the hulky triple-decker provided a home to blacks, Canadians, and Armenians.

We arrived on the Court in the summer of 1987. That spring, a fire in the triple-decker where we previously lived had rendered our fledgling Catholic Worker community homeless. We were a single man, a single woman, a young couple with a child, three homeless men, and a dog in need of a place to live. 52 Mason Street with its small, chopped-up rooms was affordable and the neighbors accepting.

In those days, the Court's road was deeply rutted and dominated by an enormous maple that grew in the southwestern corner of Eddie Yarnie's lot. Every autumn, the tree dropped a carpet of yellow and orange upon which children played countless games of catch. One spring, the irrepresible Eddie convinced a street construction crew, working nearby, to pave the worst parts of the road. Everyone cheered when the gravel truck arrived. Several summers later, he cut down the maple, its branches growing dangerously close to his roof. Today the Court is smoother but more exposed.

In the winter of 1988, the cottage directly behind our house caught fire. It was the home of Bobby Walker, a well-traveled veteran who drank heavily and entertained a lot of women in his tiny, four-room house. He and two friends survived the fire but the flames consumed his home of thirty years in just a few hot hours. Where Bobby's house once stood, he allowed us to plant a garden.

Families with as many as eight people have squeezed into these cottages. Like so many urban dwellers, our neighbors have devised ways to accomodate to their cramped quarters. Children share their beds with adults who work the night shift. When the weather warms, everyone spends a lot of time outside.

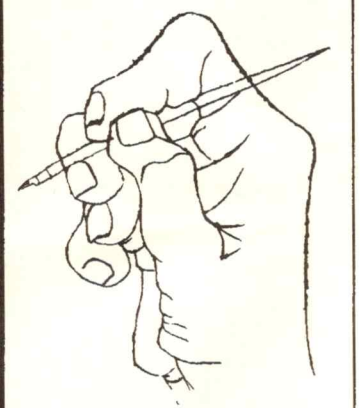


But crowded living fosters conflict. During the nineties, when the cottages were packed with people, the Court was a contentious place. I frequently longed to live elsewhere. Fences were few. Privacy, especially in those days, an impossibility. Whether we wanted it or not, we had front-row seats to our neighbors' trials. We knew when the sheriff evicted Gigi and her three boys. We knew too when Julio's mom was getting beaten by her boyfriend. Yet this intimacy, inescapable and irritating at times, was also our greatest security. The morning our then two-year-old daughter tumbled down the back porch stairs, three neighbors rushed to assist her. The night Eddie died, his teenage son Daniel wailed in the street, so we came out of our houses to comfort him.

New maps are being drawn up on Mason Street. Local developpers plan to carve out a cul-de-sac in the abandoned factory lot adjacent to the north side of the Court. Identical in length to our old court, the new one will accomodate 14 residential units that are *not* being built for the marginalized. The 2-bedroom condos, complete with a strip of lawn and garage, will cost $200,000 apiece.

Only God knows what the change in the street's architecture will mean for the neighborhood. But I am wondering. Mason Court is perhaps Worcester's most diverse nook. As in the past, the families living here now come from distant places: El Salvador, Viet Nam, Ghana. Our integration is just one of the unexpected benefits of living here. For more than a century, the Court has remained true to its mission and accomodated "the marginalized." I hope that does not change.

Letters



Ben Shahn

Dear Claire, Scott, Grace, Justin, Patrick, and Aiden,

...Richard Sitcha's story (December-January CR) drives me crazy. I'm convinced he was transferred from Greenfield [Massachusetts] because he had an embarrassingly large support system and much public awareness about his terrible situation. Thanks for publicizing his story in the east [of Massachusetts]...

Anne Larson
Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts

To the Editors:

With all due respect: "Culture War" (December-January CR) piled thesis upon thesis, with little supporting evidence or clarification of thought. For that reason, it was not clear which "culture war" the author was talking about or which values he was upholding.

A further confusion arose in his equating the Catholic Worker movement and the Catholic Church as an institution, as if the personalist or anarchist and pacifist values espoused by the Catholic Worker movement and the values espoused by the institutional church were identical.

Historically, the institutional church has often been "an opposing naysayer," in the author's words, regarding democratic values and human legislation. Catholic bishops in New England in the early 20th century, for example, opposed child labor laws, as they now oppose same sex marriage and discriminate against homosexuals. Since Augustine, church doctrine has regarded the body as practically an occasion of sin, and often justified wars and inquisitions as instruments of God's will.

Since about 1980, the Vatican has returned to an authoritarian governance associated with Pius IX ('pio nono') and undermined reforms associated with the Second Vatican Council. These developments have provoked a veritable "culture war" within the institution itself, as Paul VI ignored the counsel of his advisers on birth control and John Paul II disciplined liberation theologians, as well as Father Hans Kung, and Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen, among others.

Although the Catholic hierarchy has published recent pastorals and documents condemning war and capital punishment, it perpetuates other behavior that either misrepresents or conflicts with the life and teachings of Jesus, in light of recent historical scholarship. Meanwhile, significant amounts of the Vatican's enormous wealth go not to the poor and homeless, the principal ministry of the Catholic Worker movement, but to claims resulting from sex scandals among the clergy.

Many Catholics do indeed "live extraordinarily holy and happy lives," as Scott Schaeffer-Duffy says, but it is not always clear which or how church teachings inform those lives. A poll mentioned in a recent issue of the Los Angeles *Catholic Agitator* indicated that the more often people go to church, for example, the more likely they are to support the Bush administration and the war on Iraq.

The author of "Culture War" and the institutional church rightly point to saints inspired by the teachings of Jesus. Historical evidence and recent Vatican policies offer conflicting evidence, however, about whether Roman Catholicism is either the best custodian or most faithful manifestation of those teachings.

Michael True
Worcester, Massachusetts

Editor's Note: The cofounder of the Catholic Worker movement, Dorothy Day, acknowledged that "the Catholic Church had plenty of sin in it," but still managed to say "I love the church with all my heart and soul." She described New York's Cardinal Spellman, one of history's strongest supporters of the military, as "our chief priest and confessor; he is our spiritual leader.... But he is not our ruler. He is not someone whose every word all Catholics must heed, whose every deed we must copy.... The Catholic Church... won't budge on what it believes it has been put here to protect and defend and uphold. But the church has never told its flock that they have no rights of their own, that they ought to have no beliefs or loyalties other than those of the pope or one of his cardinals."

The Saints Francis & Thérèse Catholic Worker has challenged the hierarchy on issues like women's ordination, the Just War Theory, and usury, but has tried to do so as faithful Catholics drawing upon scripture, tradition, the saints, and, whenever possible, popes and bishops. Although it is unpopular, we share the hierarchy's opposition to abortion. We are not theologians or philosophers, though. We are lay people trying to follow Christ. We welcome criticism and dialogue. We work with and respect followers of many traditions, but draw our greatest strength from Catholicism, most especially from the Eucharist. Without this great gift of Christ's continued presence on earth, we could not continue.

Dear Scott,

I just received the December-January issue of *The Catholic Radical*. As usual, it was interesting reading. I had thought that the U.S. was responsible for at least a million Iraqi deaths, but I see that the number is much higher. The war on Iraq is an ongoing crime.

However, there is an omission in your casualty total for the Iraq Wars. You list minimum American fatalities as 2,499. During Desert Storm, we fired about 320 tons of Depleted Uranium munitions. American soldiers, as well as Iraqis, were exposed to DU toxic dust. To date, about 11,000 American veterans of that war have died. This is a huge number to have died from normal illnesses. These soldiers were also exposed to toxic dust from Iraqi chemical-weapon storage facilities that we blew up without protecting the troops from the fallout. The haste for destroying these weapons was motivated by the fact that the crates identified Jordan, England, Russia, and the United States as the origin of these chemical warfare weapons. In August, 2004,Terry Jemison of the Department of Veteran Affairs said "of the 592,561 discharged veterans from the 1991 war in Iraq, 179,310 are receiving disability compensation and another 24,743 cases are pending." The totals will keep increasing

among all those exposed.

In the current war on Iraq, the Pentagon admits that it used at least 200 tons of DU weapons! So, I think you can raise the number of American war-dead by at least 9 to 10 thousand.

Jack Minassian
Hollis, New Hampshire

Dear Scott and Claire,
...I always read *The Catholic Radical* cover to cover. Going to the St. Patrick's Four [peace activists from Ithaca, NY] trial was important to me, but it also meant that I missed the mass that was for our dear friend Dan Lawrence. I often reflect on his words to me just before he died, "Don't make plans." Lots of wisdom there. Thank you for all you do.

Daniel Sicken
North Brattleboro, Vermont

Dear Catholic Workers,
Reading in the paper today that the FBI is targeting the CW and other anarchists reminds me you must be doing something right.

Joe Peacott
Anchorage, Alaska

Dear Scott,
...I appreciated your article "Culture War." It helped me to attain "clarity of thought."

Yes, we too can become saints, but to do so is not the American Way, brother, but a rejection of the American Way. Adhering to a spiritual path surely leads to inner freedom, joy, and peace. Like you say: "those who eschew the prevailing mores of the day often take on a heavy cross." This surely does need to be acknowledged.

I wish I could attend the vigil against the Iraq War.... The mindless slaughter just cannot be justified anymore, the torture and murder of captives. I understand what Dr. Francis Boyle, an expert in international law, says in his book **Destroying World Order**: "Today, the government of the United States of America constitutes an international criminal conspiracy under the Nuremberg Charter, Judgment and Principles...." I want no participation or association with this government; an outlaw cabal that's taking weapons of mass destruction into the heavens....

F. Scott Perkins
Monticello, Florida

Media Snippets

WMD in Iraq

November 17, 2005, *Reuters*: The Pentagon acknowledged yesterday that it used white phosphorus munitions in a 2004 offensive in the Iraqi city of Fallujah, but... continued to deny a report on Italian state television last week alleging that the munitions had been used against civilian men, women, and children in Fallujah, some of whom were burned to the bone.

Johnson Lied Too

December 2, 2005, *Associated Press*: "A spy-agency analysis revealed yesterday contends a second attack on U.S. ships in the Gulf of Tonkin never happened, casting further doubt on the leading rationale for escalation of the Vietnam War....

Claims that North Vietnamese boats attacked two warships on August 4, 1964—just two days after an initial assault on one of those ships—rallied Congress behind Johnson's buildup of the war. The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution that was passed three days later empowered him to take "all necessary steps" in the region and opened the way for large-scale commitment of U.S. forces.

Nudging the News

December 11, 2005, *New York Times*: The 1,200-strong psychological operations unit based at Fort Bragg turns out what its officers call "truthful messages" to support the U.S. government's objectives, though its commander acknowledges that those stories are one-sided and their American sponsorship is hidden.

"We call our stuff information and the enemy's propaganda," said Col. Jack N. Summe, then the commander of the 4th Psychological Operations Group, during a tour in June. Even in the Pentagon, "some public affairs professionals see us unfavorably," and inaccurately, he said, as "lying dirty tricksters."

Tapping for the Truth

December 20, 2005, *Boston Globe*: "You end up in FBI files with your name and your group's name because you're doing stuff," said John Miller, FBI assistant director of public affairs.... The FBI said the Catholic Workers Group "advocates a communist distribution of resources."

Catholic Worker Calendar

February 6 & 20—Mass: Join us at 7:30 P.M. for Mass celebrated by Father John Madden. 52 Mason Street. Refrehments to follow.

February 8—Alone Across Appalachia: Please join Mike Benedetti for stories of hospitality and hardship from his solo December hike across West Virginia. 7 P.M.. 52 Mason St. Refreshments to follow.

February 13—Remember the Iraq War Dead: Please join us, on the anniversary of the US bombing of the Ameriya air raid shelter, to recall the Iraqi and American dead. Noon-1 P.M.. By the Gulf War memorial on Worcester Common. For more information: (508) 753-3588.

March 6 & 20— Mass: Join us at 7:30 P.M. for Mass celebrated by Father John Madden. 52 Mason Street. Refrehments to follow.

March 29—Stop Genocide in Darfur: Please join us at the Sudanese Embassy in Washington, DC to protest the ongoing genocide in Darfur. For more information, call: (508) 753-3588 or email theresecw@gmail.com.

Mason Street Musings

Dorothy Day, the cofounder of the Catholic Worker movement said, "If we hadn't got Christ's own words for it, it would seem raving lunacy to believe that if I offer a bed and food and hospitality... to some man, woman, or child, that my guest is Christ.... There are no haloes already glowing round their heads—at least none that human eyes can see." Dorothy was no sentimentalist. She was able to offer hospitality for the last 47 years of her life because of her faith.

Here on Mason Street, we too need faith especially when a guest calls me a "filthy dago" (I'm not even Italian for crying out loud), but Jesus' disguise is far more flimsy of late than in Dorothy Day's day. One of our women guests, Mary, spent hours each evening practicing English with Victoria, whose odyssey from El Salvador is heartbreaking. Despite life-threatening health issues, Victoria never fails to smile and ask how others are doing. When I have a splinter, distant neighbors can hear my screams—I do not suffer in silence—but this Salvadoran mother of seven *never* complains.

Another guest, Elliot, has had a grievous share of woe without losing his thoughtfulness towards others. On Christmas Day, after I said grace and served everyone at our crowded but festive table, Elliot looked up from his as-yet untouched plate to ask, "Aren't you going to join us?" He wouldn't eat a bite until I sat down. In little household tasks, he tries to anticipate need. Some people do favors to gain favor or to control a situation, but not Elliot. He has a way of helping that is genuine and unobtrusive.

Joe, who came to us via Catholic Worker friends in Virginia, was another selfless giver. In a stay of less than a month he endeared himself to all of us. But beyond their virtues, many of our guests are just plain interesting people to live with. Dinner conversations are peppered with philosophical and political discussion, travelogues, anecdotes, and outrageous non sequiturs. Never dull. Often fascinating.

Dorothy Day by Robert McGovern

When someone asked our guest Mike if he'd like to have dinner elsewhere one night, Mike answered, "No, I'd rather eat with the family." He might have been referring to the fact that Claire and my children join us for the evening meal, but I got the impression that he also felt like a part of a family. Having just spent three joyous days with my father, brothers, sister, nieces, nephews, and friends in the White Mountains of New Hampshire, I can think of no higher compliment to our hospitality. Being a guest, even an honored one, is good, but being a brother or sister is all-encompassingly grand. You have more than safe lodging. You have relationship, something that will endure when you leave. You will be missed and welcomed again in the future.

Near her death, Dorothy Day said: "I try to remember this life that the Lord gave me; the other day I wrote down the words 'a life remembered,' and I was going to try to make a summary for myself, write down what matters most—but I couldn't do it. I just sat there and thought of our Lord, and His visit to us all those centuries ago, and I said to myself that my great luck was to have had Him on my mind for so long in my life!"

Thanks to your support, we have had Him in our home and become more aware that we are all beloved members of His family. We are eternally grateful. May you all be equally blessed. Ω **Scott**

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